

That function, etc. "All powers of action are oppressed and crushed by one overwhelming image in the mind, and nothing is present to me but that which is really future. Of things now about me I have no perception, being intent wholly on that which has yet no existence" (Johnson).

144. *Stir*. Motion, action. Cf. *Rich. II.* ii. 3. 51, etc.

Come. Cf. *R. of L.* 1784: "Weak words, so thick come in his poor heart's aid."

145. *Our strange garments*. That is, new ones.

147. *Time and the hour*, etc. That is, time and occasion will carry the thing through, let its nature be what it will. A singular verb (like *runs* here) is often found with two singular nominatives, even when they are not so closely connected in sense as in this instance.

149. *Favour*. Indulgence, pardon. *Wrought* = agitated. Cf. *W. T.* v. 3. 58: —

"If I had thought the sight of my poor image
Would thus have wrought you."

151. *Register'd*. That is, in his memory.

154. *The interim having weighed*. That is, having allowed time for *weighing*, or considering it.

SCENE IV.—9. *Had been studied*. Had made it his study. Cf. *M. of V.* ii. 2. 205: —

"Like one well studied in a sad ostent
To please his grandam."

10. *Owed*. See on i. 3. 76 above.

11. *As't were*. As if it were. Cf. ii. 2. 27 below; and for *careless* in the passive sense (= uncared-for), cf. *sightless* = invisible, in i. 7. 23.

There's no art, etc. "Duncan's childlike spirit makes a moment's pause of wonder at the act of treachery, and then flings itself, like Gloster in *King Lear*, with still more absolute trust and

still more want of reflection, into the toils of a far deeper and darker treason. The pause on the word *trust*, shortening the line by two syllables, is in this point of view very suggestive" (Moberly).

19. *Proportion*. The proper proportion. Cf. *T. and C.* i. 3. 87: "proportion, season, form."

20. *Mine*. In my power, mine to *give*; as *all* in the next line means all *I have*.

23. *Pays itself*. Is its own reward.

27. *Safe toward*. With sure tendency, or certain direction.

30. *Nor*. We should now use *And*. Cf. *M. of V.* iii. 4. 11: "Nor shall not now."

33. *My plenteous joys*, etc. Cf. *R. and J.* iii. 2. 102: —

"Back, foolish tears, back to your native spring;
Your tributary drops belong to woe,
Which you, mistaking, offer up to joy;"

and *W. T.* v. 2. 47: "There might you have beheld one joy crown another, so and in such manner that it seemed sorrow wept to take leave of them, for their joy waded in tears."

37. *We will establish our estate*, etc. The throne of Scotland was originally not hereditary.

39. *Cumberland*. When the successor to the throne was designated in the lifetime of the king, the title of Prince of Cumberland was bestowed upon him. Cumberland was at that time held by Scotland of the crown of England as a fief.

45. *Harbinger*. Used here in its original sense of an officer whose duty it was to ride in advance of the king and secure lodgings for the royal retinue. Nares cites the old play of *Albumaz*, vii. 137: —

"I have no reason, nor spare room for any.
Love's harbinger hath chalk'd upon my heart,
And with a coal writ on my brain, for *Flavia*,
This house is wholly taken up for *Flavia*."

It appears that the custom was kept up as late as the time of Charles II. Hawkins, in his *Life of Bishop Ken*, says: "On the

removal of the court to pass the summer at Winchester, Bishop Ken's house, which he held in the right of his prebend, was marked by the harbinger for the use of Mrs. Eleanor Gwyn; but he refused to grant her admittance, and she was forced to seek for lodgings in another place."

50. *Stars, hide your fires!* This does not imply that it is now night, but only that he looks forward to night as the time for committing the crime.

52. *The eye, etc.* Let the eye not see what the hand does.

54. *Full so valiant.* Quite as brave as you say. While Macbeth has been soliloquizing, Duncan and Banquo have been talking about his recent deeds.

56. *Banquet.* Feast. It sometimes meant merely the *dessert*. Cf. *T. of S. v. 2. 9*:—

"My banquet is to close our stomachs up
After our great good cheer."

58. *It is.* The *it* is here used with "affectionate familiarity." Often it expresses contempt or detestation; as in *Temp. i. 2. 309*, *M. of V. i. 2. 15*, *Hen. V. iii. 6. 70*, etc.

SCENE V.—2. *By the perfectest report.* By the best intelligence—that of experience.

4. *They made themselves air.* Sheridan Knowles remarks that in the look and tone with which Mrs. Siddons delivered the word *air* "you recognized ten times the wonder with which Macbeth and Banquo actually beheld the vanishing of the witches."

5. *Whiles.* Properly the genitive of *while*, meaning "of, or during, the time." Cf. *Matthew, v. 25*.

6. *Missives.* Messengers; as in the only other instance in which S. uses the word (*A. and C. ii. 2. 74*).

7. *All-hailed.* The folio has the hyphen. Cf. Florio (*Ital. Dict.*): "Salutare, to salute, to greet, to alhaile."

10. *Deliver thee.* Report to thee. Cf. *Temp. v. 1. 313*: "I'll deliver all," etc.

17. *It is too full o' the milk of human kindness.* For the metaphor, cf. *iv. 3. 98* below, *R. and J. iii. 3. 55*, and *Lear, i. 4. 364*.

20. *The illness should.* The evil which should. S. uses *illness* only here; and the word does not occur at all in Milton's poems.

22-25. *Thou 'dst have, etc.* The general meaning seems to be: "You want to have what can only be obtained on conditions which it proclaims of itself; you wish also to have what you rather fear to do than wish not to be done."

25. *Hie thee.* Here, as in "Look thee" (*W. T. iii. 3. 116*), "Hark thee" (*Cymb. i. 5. 32*), etc., *thee* seems to be used for *thou*.

27. *Chastise.* Accented by S. on the first syllable. Cf. *Rich. II. ii. 3. 104*.

28. *The golden round.* Cf. *iv. 1. 88*:—

"And wears upon his baby brow the round
And top of sovereignty."

29. *Metaphysical.* Supernatural (to which word it is etymologically analogous). S. uses the word nowhere else. Cf. Florio's *World of Wordes*, 1598: "Metafisico, one that professeth things supernatural." On *seem*, cf. *i. 2. 47* above; also *A. W. iii. 6. 94*: "that so confidently seems to undertake this business," etc. *Doth seem to have* is nearly equivalent to *would have*.

30. *Tidings.* Like *news*, used by S. both as singular and plural.

31. *Thou 'rt mad, etc.* "The lady's self-control breaks down for a moment at hearing that Duncan is rushing into the toils; and is only by a powerful effort regained in the next words" (Moberly).

35. *Had the speed of him.* Has outstripped him.

37. *Tending.* Attendance; or *tendance*, which S. uses instead. Cf. *T. of A. i. 1. 57*, *Hen. VIII. iii. 2. 149*, *Cymb. v. 5. 53*, etc. *Tending* occurs as a noun only here.

38. *The raven himself is hoarse*, etc. Cf. James Russell Lowell's remarks on the passage (*Among My Books*, p. 186):—

"Here Shakespeare, with his wonted tact, makes use of a vulgar superstition, of a type in which mortal presentiment is already embodied, to make a common ground on which the hearer and Lady Macbeth may meet. After this prelude we are prepared to be possessed by her emotion more fully, to feel in her ears the dull tramp of the blood that seems to make the raven's croak yet hoarser than it is, and to betray the stealthy advance of the mind to its fell purpose. For Lady Macbeth hears not so much the voice of the bodeful bird as of her own premeditated murder, and we are thus made her shuddering accomplices before the fact. Every image receives the colour of the mind, every word throbs with the pulse of one controlling passion. The epithet *fatal* makes us feel the implacable resolve of the speaker, and shows us that she is tampering with her conscience by putting off the crime upon the prophecy of the Weird Sisters to which she alludes. In the word *battlements*, too, not only is the fancy led up to the perch of the raven, but a hostile image takes the place of a hospitable one; for men commonly speak of receiving a guest under their roof or within their doors. When Duncan and Banquo arrive at the castle, their fancies, free from all suggestion of evil, call up only gracious and amiable images. The raven was but the fantastical creation of Lady Macbeth's overwrought brain.

'This *guest* of summer,
The *temple-haunting* martlet, doth approve
By his *lov'd mansionry* that the heaven's breath
Smells *wooningly* here; no jutting, frieze,
Buttress, or coign of vantage, but this bird
Hath made his pendent bed and procreant cradle.'

"The contrast here cannot but be as intentional as it is marked. Every image is one of welcome, security, and confidence. The summer, one may well fancy, would be a very different hostess from her whom we have just seen expecting *them*. And why *temple-haunting*,

unless because it suggests sanctuary? *O immaginativa, che si ne rubi delle cose di fuor*, [O imagination, who takest away outward things], how infinitely more precious are the inward ones thou givest in return! If all this be accident, it is at least one of those accidents of which only this man was ever capable."

39. *Entrance*. A trisyllable here.

41. *Mortal*. Deadly; as very often in S. and other writers. On *tend*, see on 37 above.

42. *Top-full*. Used again in *K. John*, iii. 4. 180.

44. *Access*. Accented as here by S. except in *Ham.* ii. 1. 110. *Remorse* = relenting, pity; as in *V. and A.* 257: "'Pity,' she cries, 'some favour, some remorse!'" See also *Temp.* v. 1. 76, *M. of V.* iv. 1. 20, *K. John*, ii. 1. 478, etc. So S. uses *remorseful* = pitiful (*T. G. of V.* iv. 3. 13, *A. W.* v. 3. 58, etc.) and *remorseless* = pitiless (*R. of L.* 562, *Ham.* ii. 2. 609, etc.). This last word is still used in the same sense.

46. *Keep peace between*, etc. Come between the purpose and its accomplishment; "as one who interferes between a violent man and the object of his wrath keeps peace."

48. *Take my milk for gall*. That is, turn it to gall.

49. *Sightless substances*. Invisible forms. See on *careless*, i. 4. 11, and cf. i. 7. 23 below.

51. *Pall*. Wrap (Latin *pallire*, from *pallium*). Used by S. only here, and perhaps by no other writer as a verb. Of course, *pall* = become vapid (*Ham.* v. 2. 9, *A. and C.* ii. 7. 88) is an entirely different word.

53. *Blanket*. This word has sorely troubled the critics. Coleridge suggested "blank height," but omitted it in the 2d ed. of his *Table Talk*. *Blackness* and *blankest* are other attempts at emendation where none is needed. Malone remarks: "*Blanket* was perhaps suggested by the coarse woollen curtain of S.'s own theatre, through which, probably, while the house was but yet half-lighted, he had himself often peeped." Whiter (quoted by Furness) says: "Nothing is more certain than that all the images in this pas-

sage are borrowed from the *stage*. The peculiar and appropriate dress of *Tragedy* is a *pall*¹ and a *knife*. When tragedies were represented, the stage was hung with black. . . . In *R. of L.* (764-770) there is a wonderful coincidence with this passage, in which we have not only '*Black stage for tragedies and murders fell,*' but also '*comfort-killing Night, image of hell,*' corresponding with *thick Night* and the dunnest smoke of hell. Again, in line 788, we have '*Through Night's black bosom should not peep again.*'" But, whatever may have suggested it, *blanket*, though homely, is Shakespearian.

55. *Hereafter*. Mrs. Jameson remarks: "This is surely the very rapture of ambition! and those who have heard Mrs. Siddons pronounce the word *hereafter* cannot forget the look, the tone, which seemed to give her auditors a glimpse of the awful *future*, which she, in her prophetic fury, beholds upon the instant."

57. *Ignorant*. "Unknowing; I feel by anticipation those future honours, of which, according to the process of nature, the *present time* would be *ignorant*" (Johnson). *Feel* is metrically a dissyllable.

63. *To beguile the time*. That is, to deceive the world.

65. *Look like the innocent flower*, etc. Cf. *Rich. II.* iii. 2. 19:—

"And when they from thy bosom pluck a flower,
Guard it, I pray thee, with a lurking adder;"

and 2 *Hen. VI.* iii. 1. 228: "The snake roll'd in a flowering bank."

72. *To alter favour*, etc. To bear an altered face marks fear in you and creates it in others. On *favour* = face, cf. *J. C.* i. 2. 91: "Your outward favour," etc. See also *Proverbs*, xxxi. 30.

SCENE VI.—Sir Joshua Reynolds remarks: "This short dialogue between Duncan and Banquo has always appeared to me a

¹ Cf. Milton, *Il Pens.* 97:—

"Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy
In sceptred pall come sweeping by."—(Ed.)

striking instance of what in painting is termed *repose*. Their conversation very naturally turns upon the beauty of the situation, and the pleasantness of the air; and Banquo, observing the martlets' nests in every recess of the cornice, remarks that where those birds most breed and haunt the air is delicate. The subject of this quiet and easy conversation gives that repose so necessary to the mind after the tumultuous bustle of the preceding scenes, and perfectly contrasts the scene of horror that immediately succeeds."

3. *Gentle senses*. That is, which it *makes* gentle, or soothes; an instance of "prolepsis," or the *anticipation*, in an adjective, of the *result* of the action. There is a striking example of this figure in Keats's *Isabella*:—

"So the two brothers and their murder'd man
Rode past fair Florence;"

the *murder'd* man being not yet despatched, though soon to be so. Cf. i. 3. 84 and iii. 4. 76 below.

4. *Martlet*. The folios have "Barlet." The emendation is Rowe's, and is adopted by all the editors. It is supported by *M. of V.* ii. 9. 28: "Like the martlet, Builds in the weather on the outward wall." Cf. *T. of A.* iii. 6. 31. *Approve* = prove; as often in *S.* Cf. *M. of V.* iii. 2. 79, 2 *Hen. IV.* i. 2. 180, *A. W.* iii. 7. 13, etc.

5. *Mansionry*. Theobald's emendation for the "Mansony" of the folios. *Mansionry* is found nowhere else, but it is generally adopted by the editors here.

6. *Jutty*. The folios read "jutty frieze" without a comma between, as if *jutty* were an adjective. It is not, however, found as an adjective, though it occurs both as a substantive and as a verb. For the latter, see *Hen. V.* iii. 1. 13: "O'erhang and jutty his con-founded base." *S.* uses the word only twice.

7. *Coign of vantage*. Convenient corner. Cf. *Cor.* v. 4. 1. As an architectural term it is now commonly written *quoin*.

II-14. *The love*, etc. "Duncan says that even love sometimes

occasions him trouble, but that he thanks it as love, notwithstanding; and that thus he teaches Lady Macbeth, while she takes trouble on his account, to 'bid God yield,' or reward, him for giving that trouble." S. uses *sometime* and *sometimes* indifferently, both in this sense and as an adjective = former. *God 'ield* is a corruption of "God yield." "God ild" and "God dild" are common forms of it in the old writers. Cf. *A. Y. L.* iii. 3. 76, v. 4. 56, *A. and C.* iv. 2. 33, *Ham.* iv. 5. 41, etc.

16. *Single business*. That is, small business. Cf. i. 3. 140 above. *To contend against* = to vie with.

19. *To them*. Cf. iii. 1. 51 below.

20. *Hermits*. We as hermits, or *beadsmen*, will pray for you.

21. *Cours'd*. Chased. Cf. *Lear*, iii. 4. 58: "to course his own shadow," etc.

22. *Purveyor*. An officer sent forward to provide food for the king and his retinue, as the *harbinger* to obtain lodging. The word, used nowhere else by S., is accented on the first syllable.

23. *Holp*. An old past tense and participle of *help*; used by S. much oftener than *helped*. Cf. *Rich. II.* v. 5. 62, *Temp.* i. 2. 63, etc.

26. *In compt*. In account, accountable. Cf. *A. W.* v. 3. 57, etc.

31. *By your leave*. Duncan gives his hand to Lady Macbeth, and leads her into the castle.

SCENE VII.—The *sewer* in the stage-direction was the servant who put the dishes on the table, and tasted of them before serving them. Cf. *Rich. II.* v. 5. 99.

1, 2. The punctuation given is essentially that of the folios, and is followed by most of the editors. A few point it thus:—

"If it were done when 't is done, then 't were well.
It were done quickly if the assassination
Could trammel," etc.

If we retain the old pointing—which seems best, on the whole—the meaning is: "If the act were really over when done, then the sooner we accomplish it the better."

3. *Trammel up*. Entangle as in a net. A *trammel* was a kind of net. Cf. Quarles, *Emblems*: "Nay, Cupid, pitch thy trammel where thou please." In Spenser it is a net for the hair; as in *F. Q.* ii. 2. 15:—

"Her golden lockes she roundly did uptye
In breaded tramels" (that is, braided nets).

4. *His surcease*. Its conclusion, or cessation. *His* was often used for *its*, which was just coming into use in the time of S. *Surcease* has no etymological connection with *cease*, being derived from the Fr. *surseoir* (Lat. *supersedere*). S. uses it as a noun only here; but as a verb in *R. of L.* 1766, *Cor.* iii. 2. 121, and *R. and J.* iv. 1. 97. *Success* is used in its ordinary sense; as in i. 3. 90, 132, and i. 5. 2 above. It sometimes means "sequel, what follows"; as in *T. and C.* ii. 2. 117: "fear of bad success," etc.

6. *But here*. Only here, only in this life.

Shoal. The folios have "Schoole," which some critics would retain, but *shoal* is generally adopted. It means "this shallow of human life, as opposed to the great abyss of eternity."

7. *Jump*. For *jump* = risk, hazard, cf. *Cor.* iii. 1. 154: "To jump a body with a dangerous physic;" and *Cymb.* v. 4. 188: "jump the after inquiry on your own peril."

8. *That*. So that; as in line 25 below. See on i. 3. 57 above.

11. *Commends*. Offers, commits. Cf. *Rich. II.* iii. 3. 116: "His glittering arms he will commend to rust;" *A. and C.* iv. 8. 23: "Commend unto his lips thy favouring hand," etc. See also iii. 1. 38 below.

17. *Faculties*. Official powers or prerogatives. Cf. *Hen. VIII.* i. 2. 73:—

"If I am
Traded by ignorant tongues, which neither know
My faculties nor person."

20. *Taking-off*. Cf. *Lear*, v. 1. 65: "His speedy taking off." See also iii. 1. 104 below.

21. *A naked new-born babe*. "Either like a mortal babe terrible in helplessness; or like heaven's child-angels, mighty in love and compassion" (Moberly).

22. *Cherubin*. Cf. *Temp.* i. 2, 152: "a cherubin," etc. The form *cherubim* is not used by S. He has the plural *cherubins* in *Sonn.* 114. 6.

23. *Sightless*. See on i. 5. 49 above.

25. *That tears*, etc. See on 8 above. Cf. *T. and C.* iv. 4. 55: "Where are my tears? Rain, to lay this wind."

I have no spur, etc. Malone says: "There are two distinct metaphors. I have no spur to prick the sides of my intent: I have nothing to *stimulate* me to the execution of my purpose, but ambition, which is apt to overreach itself; this he expresses by the second image, of a person meaning to vault into his saddle, who, by taking too great a leap, will fall on the other side."

28. *On the other*. That is, the other *side*; but there is no necessity for supplying "side," as some have done.

32. *Bought*. Acquired, gained; a figurative use of the word natural enough, and common in S. Cf. *L. L. L.* i. 1. 5:—

"The endeavour of this present breath may buy
That honour," etc.

Cf. also the use of *purchase* in *Rich. II.* i. 3. 282 and *M. of V.* ii. 9. 43.

35. *Was the hope drunk*, etc. A mixture of metaphors; but the sense is clear: "Were you drunk when you formed your bold plan, and are you now just awake from the debauch, to be crest-fallen, shrinking, mean-spirited?" The *dressed* was apparently suggested by the figure just used by Macbeth. For a similar figure, without the "mixture," see *K. John*, iv. 2. 116.

41. *Wouldst thou have*, etc. Do you desire the crown, yet resolve to live a coward because your daring will not second your desire?

45. *The poor cat*, etc. Johnson quotes the Low Latin form of

the proverb: "Catus amat pisces, sed non vult tingere plantas." In French it is "Le chat aime le poisson, mais il n'aime pas à mouiller ses pattes." Cf. Heywood's *Proverbs*, 1566: "The cate would eate fishe, and would not wet her feete."

47. *Who dares do more is none*. Cf. *M. for M.* ii. 4. 134:—

"Be that you are,
That is, a woman; if you be more, you're none."

Hunter would retain the folio reading ("no more"), and give the line to Lady Macbeth.

What beast, etc. If this enterprise be not the device of a *man*, what *beast* induced *you* to propose it?

48. *Break*. Here followed by *to*, as it would be now, but often in S. by *with*; as in *J. C.* ii. 1. 150, *Hen. VIII.* v. 1. 47, etc.

52. *Adhere*. Cohere, be suitable. Cf. *M. W.* ii. 1. 62 and *T. N.* iii. 4. 86.

53. *That their fitness*. Cf. ii. 2. 61 and iii. 6. 48 below.

59. *We fail*. Mrs. Jameson says: "In her impersonation of the part of Lady Macbeth, Mrs. Siddons adopted successively three different intonations in giving the words *we fail*. At first a quick contemptuous interrogation—'we fail?' Afterwards with the note of admiration—'we fail!' and an accent of indignant astonishment, laying the principal emphasis on the word *we*—*we fail!* Lastly, she fixed on what I am convinced is the true reading—'we fail' with the simple period, modulating her voice to a deep, low, resolute tone, which settled the issue at once—as though she had said, 'if we fail, why then we fail, and all is over.' This is consistent with the dark fatalism of the character and the sense of the line following, and the effect was sublime, almost awful."

Compare what Fletcher (*Studies of Shakespeare*) says: "Her quiet reply, 'We fail,' is every way most characteristic of the speaker—expressing that moral firmness in herself which makes her quite prepared to endure the consequences of failure—and, at the same time, conveying the most decisive rebuke of such moral cowardice

in her husband as can make him recede from a purpose merely on account of the possibility of defeat — a possibility which, up to the very completion of their design, seems never absent from her own mind, though she finds it necessary to banish it from that of her husband."

60. *But screw your courage*, etc. A metaphor from *screwing up* the chords of stringed instruments. Cf. *Cor.* i. 8. 11: "Wrench up thy power to the highest;" and *T. N.* v. 1. 125: —

"And that I partly know the instrument
That screws me from my true place in your favour."

64. *Wassail*. Originally, the "toast," or form of words (= be well, a health to you!) in which healths were pledged in drinking; thence a drinking-bout or carousal; and also applied to the spiced ale or wine used on such occasions. Cf. *L. L. L.* v. 2. 318: "At wakes and wassails;" *Ham.* i. 4. 9: "keeps wassail," etc. *Convince* = overcome (Lat. *convincere*); as in iv. 3. 142 below. See also *Oth.* iv. 1. 28.

66. *Shall be a fume*. Cf. *Temp.* v. 1. 67: —

"The ignorant fumes that mantle
Their clearer reason."

Receipt. Receptacle; the only instance of this meaning in S. Cf. *Matthew*, ix. 9: "the receipt of custom."

67. *Limbeck*. Alembic; as in *Sonn.* 119. 2. Cf. Milton, *P. L.* iii. 605: "Drain'd through a limbec."

68. *A death*. A kind of death, a sleep like death. Cf. *W. T.* iv. 2. 3.

71. *Spongy*. Drunken. In *M. of V.* i. 2. 108, the guzzling German is compared to a sponge.

72. *Quell*. Murder. *Quell* in Old English = *kill*, which is originally the same word. Cf. Spenser, *F. Q.* ii. 7. 40: —

"and well could weld [wield]
That cursed weapon, when his cruell foes he queld."

Man-queller (= manslayer, murderer) occurs in *2 Hen. IV.* ii. 1. 58. The redoubtable "Jack" was formerly called "the giant-queller," instead of "giant-killer."

73. *Mettle*. In the early eds. no distinction is made between *metal* and *mettle*.

74. *Receiv'd*. Accepted as true, believed. Cf. *M. for M.* i. 3. 16: —

"For so I have strew'd it in the common ear,
And so it is receiv'd;"

T. G. of V. v. 4. 78: "And once again I do receive thee honest," etc.

77. *Other*. Otherwise. Cf. v. 4. 8 below.

79. *Bend up*. Strain, like a bow. Cf. *Hen. V.* iii. 1. 16: —

"Hold hard the breath, and bend up every spirit
To his full height."

80. *Each corporal agent*. All my bodily powers.

81. *Mock the time*. See on i. 5. 63 above.